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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002316

SIPDIS

PASS TO NEA FOR DIBBLE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2013

TAGS: PREL YM I2

SUBJECT: INCREASING YEMENI SUPPORT FOR IRAQI GOVERNMENT

REF: A. SANAA 2187

¶B. FBIS RESTON - 031907Z SEP 03

¶C. SANAA 1818

Classified By: Ambassador Edmund J. Hull for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

¶11. (c) On September 15, the DCM discussed Iraq and other issues with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Under Secretary Hussein Taher bin Yahia, who said that the ROYG would welcome a visit by the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) "with open arms," and that plans for such travel would most likely be arranged through Yemen's mission in Baghdad. The DCM commended Yemen's support of the Iraqi delegation at the Arab League ministerial in Cairo, September 12-14.

¶12. (c) Pol/Econ Chief and Pol/Econoff met with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director of the Americas Office Abdulsalem Qassim al-Awadhi on September 9 to deliver several unrelated demarches (septels). During the meeting, al-Awadhi previewed that the ROYG was joining other Arab countries in support for allowing IGC a seat at the table for the Arab League meeting of foreign ministers. He noted that the main purpose of the recent visit of Syrian Vice President Khaddam was to discuss Iraq. Note: This is in contrast to press reports and a Syrian diplomat in Sanaa who claimed the main purpose of the visit was bilateral relations. End note. When asked about whether the IGC would visit Yemen, al-Awadhi said that the ROYG is prepared to welcome the Council and there has been some speculation that the IGC will visit Yemen and other countries after the Arab League meeting, but no firm plans have been discussed.

¶13. (u) Background: On or about August 28, the ROYG announced that it would recognize the Iraqi cabinet. Several days later the Yemen Government officially welcomed the formation of an Iraqi government under U.S. civilian supervision (ref b). Local press reports that in a recent satellite television interview Foreign Minister Qirbi reaffirmed the ROYG position that U.S. and British forces should withdraw from Iraq and said that the Arab League and the UN should provide the groundwork for any new Iraqi constitution. End background.

¶13. (c) Comment: Yahia's and al-Awadhi's seemingly enthusiastic support for a visit by the IGC is a welcome development, but it does not appear that the government is extending an invitation to the Council so much as expecting that it will include Yemen in any as-yet-unannounced official travel plans (ref a). End comment.

HULL